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World crime trends and responses: integration and coordination of efforts by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and by Member States in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice

Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking

Report of the Executive Director

Summary

The present report provides a brief overview of the activities of the Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking. Launched by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in March 2007, the Global Initiative brings together a range of regional and international organizations, the private sector and civil society in a catalyst for action against human trafficking. The aim is to raise awareness and stimulate international action to counter human trafficking and achieve a more effective implementation of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. In accordance with decisions 16/1 and 16/2 of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, UNODC held a series of consultative meetings in which Member States provided guidance for the Global Initiative and for a major international event, the Vienna Forum, to be held from 13 to 15 February 2008. In addition, a Steering Committee met regularly to coordinate among its members the activities of the Global Initiative, based on guidance from Member States.

* E/CN.15/2008/1.



The present report sets out the work leading up to the Vienna Forum. A subsequent report will be prepared on the Vienna Forum and on other activities of the Global Initiative. That report will be made available to the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime at its fourth session, to be held in October 2008, with further reporting to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, if required.

I. Introduction

1. In its decision 16/1, the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice decided that the Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking should be guided by Member States. In accordance with Commission decisions 16/1 and 16/2, the present report, based on information available by 31 January 2008, provides details of developments regarding the Global Initiative.

2. The Global Initiative, which is financially supported by the United Arab Emirates, was launched in London in March 2007 by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). It brings together a range of regional and international organizations, the private sector and civil society to work as a catalyst for action against human trafficking. The aim of the Initiative is to raise awareness and create momentum in order to stimulate international action to counter human trafficking and achieve a more effective implementation of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.¹

II. Steering Committee

3. In order to ensure and facilitate coordination of the Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking, a Steering Committee was established, comprising representatives of the following organizations of the United Nations system and other entities: UNODC, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; the United Nations Children's Fund; the International Labour Organization; the International Organization for Migration; the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe; and the Diwan of the Crown Prince, Abu Dhabi.

4. The Steering Committee is the principal coordinating and advisory body in the task of achieving the goals of the Global Initiative, under the guidance of Member States. Pursuant to Commission decision 16/1, the Steering Committee is mandated to take action on the Global Initiative only under the guidance of Member States. In that regard, in the informal consultations held, several Member States expressed their satisfaction with the work of the Steering Committee, noting that it embodied the ongoing "One United Nations" reform. In 2007, the Steering Committee held meetings in Vienna on 23 May, 3 July, 8 August, 13 November and 11 December and in Geneva on 4 September. The Steering Committee has so far in 2008 met once in Geneva on 17 January.

III. Consultations with Member States

5. Pursuant to Commission decision 16/1, in which the Commission decided that Member States should guide the Global Initiative through informal open-ended intergovernmental consultations, a series of consultation meetings were held (on 18 June, 16, 20, 23, 25, 26 and 30 July, 1 August, 7 September, 1 October, 7 and 22 November and 14 December 2007 and on 11 and 13 January and

¹ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2237, No. 39574.

6 February 2008). At those meetings, UNODC briefed Member States on the ongoing process and all aspects of the Global Initiative, such as the outcome of regional events, expert group meetings, the research process and the content of the meetings of the Steering Committee. Since November 2007, the meetings have focused on the preparations for the Vienna Forum, in particular the content, the plenary sessions, the list of speakers and moderators and the logistical preparations for the Forum.

6. At an intersessional meeting of the Commission held on 1 August 2007, a decision was made to reschedule the event proposed for November 2007 to 13-15 February 2008 and to name it the "Vienna Forum". In addition, the objectives of the Vienna Forum were agreed, and a target date was set for Member States to endorse the provisional programme. Member States subsequently endorsed the provisional programme in late September 2007. In its decision 16/2, the Commission endorsed the decision on the Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking approved at its intersessional meeting held on 1 August 2007.

7. Periodic consultative meetings were held, and Member States gave advice to UNODC regarding the structure of the Vienna Forum, including the selection of speakers, moderators and invitees.

8. Information on the Global Initiative and the Vienna Forum, including reports of the Steering Committee, was placed on the website for Member States maintained by UNODC. In addition, a dedicated public website was created for the Global Initiative (www.ungift.org).

IV. Regional events of the Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking

9. As part of the Global Initiative, a series of events to focus attention on various aspects of the human trafficking problem were held in 2007. The first event, which was held in Kampala from 19 to 22 June 2007, addressed the issue of such trafficking in countries in conflict and post-conflict situations. Participants included government officials and representatives of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations from the 11 States members of the Eastern African Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization. The outcome included recommendations for tackling trafficking in persons in conflict and post-conflict settings and a draft regional action plan. A detailed report on that event will be distributed on CD-ROM at the Vienna Forum.

10. A meeting held in Brasilia from 2 to 4 October 2007 focused on the development of the national action plan of Brazil which emphasizes monitoring and evaluation. Other topics discussed at the meeting included the relationship between migration and human trafficking and that between HIV/AIDS and human trafficking. The participants included high-level representatives of Government and non-governmental organizations in Latin America. A detailed report on the event will be distributed on CD-ROM at the Vienna Forum.

11. A regional event on criminal justice responses to human trafficking was held in Bangkok from 2 to 4 October 2007. The goal of the event was to find ways to end impunity for traffickers and secure justice for victims. Agreement was reached on

eight key recommendations, including a proposal to ensure that States either extradite or prosecute offenders, thus removing any possibility of safe havens. Participants included senior legal and law enforcement officials from East Asia and the Pacific. The recommendations, including the chairman's report, have been placed on the website for Member States maintained by UNODC.

12. An event entitled "Interfaith dialogue: what religious communities can do to combat human trafficking" was held in Cape Town, South Africa, from 3 to 5 October 2007. At the event, religious leaders of all faiths committed themselves to a detailed plan of action, which has been placed on the website for Member States maintained by UNODC.

13. The South Asia Regional Conference of the Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking was held in New Delhi on 10 and 11 October 2007, with more than 800 participants from Government, the media, the film industry and the arts industry, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and United Nations agencies in South Asia. The conference dealt with responses to trafficking for sexual exploitation in South Asia and focused on raising awareness of the problem through new partnerships. In the Delhi Declaration, the outcome of the conference, participants recognized the need to reduce demand for prostitution and the use of child and forced labour. A detailed report from the event will be distributed on CD-ROM at the Vienna Forum. In addition, a public service announcement from the conference will be screened at the Vienna Forum.

14. A regional conference on trafficking in human beings in the Black Sea region was held in Istanbul on 9 and 10 October 2007, hosted by the ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey and co-organized by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development. The conference addressed ways to further improve international cooperation and cooperation between law enforcement and non-governmental organizations concerning the referral of victims of trafficking, as well as data collection and information management. Participants agreed to place the issue of human trafficking high on the agenda of the Budapest Process, an intergovernmental forum on migration in the wider European region, which is currently chaired by Turkey.

15. The conference "Preventing Trafficking in Human Beings: Challenges and Solutions" was held in Vilnius on 25 and 26 October 2007. The conference, which was organized jointly by the Government of Lithuania, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and UNODC, underlined the role of the media in preventing trafficking in persons and encouraged other non-traditional stakeholders, in particular the business community and educational institutions, to join forces to create a better and safer social environment for all.

V. Tools and instruments

16. As part of the Global Initiative, several expert group meetings were held in Vienna to develop training material and other products designed to provide assistance to Governments, civil society, the business community, international organizations and other relevant actors in implementing measures to prevent and combat human trafficking. The meetings were attended by experts on human

trafficking from many countries, as well as by representatives of non-governmental organizations and international organizations.

17. UNODC held meetings on 12-16 and 19-23 February, 17-19 July and 12-16 November 2007 to develop comprehensive, advanced training material and manuals for law enforcement officers, prosecutors and judges. The training manuals will be finalized in 2008. In addition, an expert group meeting was held from 1 to 4 October 2007 to develop a model law on trafficking in persons and an explanatory note in order to assist Governments in developing their legal frameworks to comply with the Trafficking in Persons Protocol.

18. A draft handbook for parliamentarians has been compiled, and a summary of the handbook will be presented for discussion at the Parliamentary Forum to be held in Vienna on 12 February 2008. A revised version of the handbook, taking into account comments on the draft provided by participants at the Parliamentary Forum, will be presented at the assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union to be held in Cape Town, South Africa, in April 2008.

VI. Improving knowledge of human trafficking: the research component of the Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking

19. Many Governments, organizations and individuals worldwide are committed to fighting human trafficking, but the absence of reliable data hampers their efforts. The clandestine nature of human trafficking makes gathering information on the issue difficult. The lack of primary data makes it difficult to identify the factors causing human trafficking or to establish best practices in preventing, countering and assessing its overall impact.

20. Accordingly, one of the main objectives of the Global Initiative is to improve understanding of the problem and create a comprehensive knowledge base. The research component of the Global Initiative is a substantial undertaking that includes data collection, analysis and joint research initiatives. Research is being conducted in various parts of the world, and it is expected that the results of that research will be made available to Member States by mid-2008.

VII. Report on the Vienna Forum

21. The outcome of the Vienna Forum and other activities of the Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking will be submitted by UNODC to the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime at its fourth session, to be held in October 2008.

VIII. Recommendations

22. It is recommended that UNODC prepare a report on the Vienna Forum and overall progress of the Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking, for submission to the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against

Transnational Organized Crime at its fourth session, to be held in October 2008, with further reporting to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, if required.

23. It is recommended that the Steering Committee of the Global Initiative review results of the Vienna Forum and coordinate, guided by Member States, any further action to be taken.

24. It is recommended that, upon the conclusion of the research component of the Global Initiative, a report on that research should be prepared by UNODC for Member States and the members of the Steering Committee.

25. In recognition of the serious nature, and extent, of human trafficking, it is recommended that Member States be encouraged to ratify and effectively implement the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

26. It is recommended that Member States be encouraged to promote, within the relevant national agencies and organizations, the use of the wide array of tools and assistance offered by UNODC to prevent and counter trafficking in persons.
